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C.I.A., in Biography, Depicts K.G.B. Defector as Major Spy

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WASHINGTON, Nov. 8 — The Central Intelligence Agency today issued a biography of Vitaly S. Yurchenko, characterizing him as a senior Soviet spy who rose to the military rank of "General-designate" in a 25-year career with the K.G.B.

The action by the C.I.A. which almost never makes public products of its intelligence-gathering, may have been part of an effort to counter questions raised by some Administration officials and members of Congress about the significance of Mr. Yurchenko's defection and the value of the information he provided in three months of exhaustive interrogation before he apparently decided last week to return the Soviet Union.

The agency's biography outlines in detail Mr. Yurchenko's foreign postings and his responsibilities in a succession of increasingly significant assignments, providing an unusual case history of a Soviet intelligence operative. The agency, however, did not give any information on whatever data Mr. Yurchenko provided to the United States.

Glimpse of Soviet Intelligence

Titled "Vitaly Sergeyevich Yurchenko," the document offers several intriguing glimpses at one of the Soviet Union's most secret organizations. It cryptically notes that at one point in his career, Mr. Yurchenko was responsible for use of "special drugs" and said that in his most recent assignment, he was responsible for drawing up intelligence strategies that would be used against the United States and Canada after the "beginning of war."

Roy Godson, a professor at Georgetown University who specializes in intelligence matters, said: "It's an extraordinarily detailed public statement with few, if any precedents. It mentions sections of the K.G.B. that I've never heard of."

The biography says Mr. Yurchenko was deputy chief of the department

that ran the K.G.B.'s operations in the United States and Canada, which tried to recruit citizens of those countries as Soviet agents. He also supervised the K.G.B.'s joint operations in North America with other Eastern bloc intelligence services.

The document also provides a surprising amount of personal detail, noting that Mr. Yurchenko's 27-year marriage to an engineer at a Planning Institute in Moscow was "seriously strained prior to his defection."

According to sources in Canada, Mr. Yurchenko was driven to Ottawa by American intelligence agents in late September to persuade the wife of a Soviet diplomat, with whom he is said to have had a longstanding love affair, to join him in the United States. The woman, turned his proposal to defect down, the sources said, and he went back to the United States discouraged. Later, the K.G.B. agent decided to go home to the Soviet Union.

No source is listed for the biography's information, although officials familiar with Mr. Yurchenko's interrogation said he had been questioned at length about his career. At the press conference announcing his return to the Soviet Union, Mr. Yurchenko said he had been kidnapped by the C.I.A. and drugged. He said he did not remember whether he had given American agents any secret information while under the influence of drugs.

The State Department has strongly

denied the charges, saying Mr. Yurchenko defected of his own volition in August and had been willingly cooperating ever since with the C.I.A. and F.B.I.

Earlier this week, President Reagan suggested that Mr. Yurchenko's apparent defection and sudden decision to return to his homeland might have been a Soviet ploy. Mr. Reagan said the Russian's revelations were "not anything new or sensational." Administration officials said the President's remarks reflected his senior aides' skepticism about the validity of the defection.

A White House official said tonight that Mr. Reagan was referring to the fact that some of Mr. Yurchenko's revelations were "historical." "There's not question the guy's rank is pretty well established," the official said. "The jury is still out on whether he was bona fide or not."

William J. Casey, the Director of Central Intelligence, has told Congressional officials that Mr. Yurchenko was a valued catch for Western intelligence who had provided significant information about Soviet espionage practices. That assessment was echoed by a Soviet specialist outside the C.I.A. who said Mr. Yurchenko gave American authorities a wealth of information about the techniques used by the K.G.B.

According to the biography, Mr. Yurchenko was born on May 2, 1936, in the village of Bolshoye Shkumдино in the Smolensk region of the Russian Soviet Federated Socialist Republic. His father, a factory worker, died during World War II in the siege of Leningrad, the city in which his mother settled after the war. She died this year.

After graduating from a secondary school that prepares its students for military careers, Mr. Yurchenko attended the Leningrad Higher Naval School of Submarine Navigation and was commissioned a lieutenant in the Soviet Navy. The document says that he served with the 4th Independent Submarine Brigade at Vladivostok.

Mr. Yurchenko was married in 1958 and his first child, a daughter, was born in 1961. He adopted a son in 1969, and at the press conference this week, he referred to this child's adolescent troubles. "His relationship with his wife was seriously strained prior to his defection," the C.I.A. said.